SFChronicle OCT. 19 1979

JFK's Assassin

Officials Want to Exhume Oswald

Dallas

Dallas County authorities confirmed yesterday they are seeking permission to exhume the body of the man who assassinated President John Kennedy because they are no longer certain the body is that of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Dallas County Medical Examiner Charles Petty said he sent a formal letter to officials in neighboring Tarrant County asking that the coffin buried in Rose Hill Cemetary in Fort Worth be dug up and reopened for a new autopsy.

Assistant medical examiner Dr. Linda Norton said the request was made after British author Michael Eddowes presented evidence that Kennedy was killed by a Soviet KGB agent who masqueraded as Oswald.

"The data was presented to us in August and it took some time to evaluate and decide if we felt that, professionally and scientifically, there was a legitimate question," she said.

"We had to decide if it was in the public interest and if it was worth spending taxpayer money. We decided it was."

Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963, as his motorcade moved past the Texas School Book Depository Building. A man officials identified as Oswald was arrested within hours of the assassination.

Two days after Kennedy was killed, the assassin was gunned down in the basement of the Dallas County courthouse by nightclub owner Jack Ruby.

The assassination has spawned numerous conspiracy theories, one of which contends Russian agents were responsible for Kennedy's death.

Earlier this year, Eddowes presented evidence to a district court in Tarrant County asking for the exhumation. That court dismissed Eddowes' suit, however, saying it could only act upon the request of Dallas County officials. Eddowes then took his case to the Dallas County Medical Examiner's office.

"The data presented to us involves scars, height, eye color and things like this," Dr. Norton said. "There are discrepancies from autopsy records taken after he was killed and records of Oswald when he was in the Marines."

She said her office made an inquiry to U.S. Marine Corps officials and had obtained dental records from Oswald's military file. She said that if the request for the exhumation was approved, those dental records would be matched against the body. After the dental records were received, Petty said he made the official request of Tarrant County authorities to bring the coffin to the surface.

Dr. Norton said some officials were reluctant to go ahead with what normally would be a routine exhumation order.

Assistant Tarrant County District Attorney Marvin Collins said an order from the district court was needed to exhume the body.

United Press